[Translation]

Guage Conversion between Jabalpur and Gondia

3602. SHRI SUKH LAL KUSHWAHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to convert Jabalpur-Gondia rail line into broad gauge; and

(b) if so, the time by when it is likely to be converted?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The work is expected to be completed in about 5 years time subject to availability of resources.

Beautification of Railway Stations

3603. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any plan for beautification of Bachhbara, Teghra, Barauni, Tialkh, Begusarai, Lakho, Lakhminiyan, Sahebpur Kamal and Khagarlya Stations in North-Eastern Railways; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Railways do not undertake any beautification works as such. However, works to provide adequate amenities to the passengers and for the proper upkeep and maintenance of the stations are taken up regularly wherever warranted. Recently, works of improvement and remodelling of station building at Khagariya, extension of platform shelter and extension of reservation office at Barauni, provision of foot-over bridge at Begusarai have been taken up.

[English]

Opening of Taranga Hill-Mehsana Rail Line

3604. SHRI B.K. GADHVI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Taranga Hill-Mehsana railway line was closed due to commencement of conversion work of New Delhi-Ahmedabad line from Metre Gauge to Broad Gauge;

(b) whether this line has not been opened even after the completion of conversion work of Delhi-Ahmedabad line;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the time by which Taranga-Mehsana rail line is likely to be reopened ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Services could not be restored due to extensive damages caused to the railway track in the recent floods.

(d) It will take about two months time to restore the line.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchanges in Hilly Areas of Uttar Pradesh

3605. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Telephone Exchanges set up in hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh particularly during 1996-97, district-wise;

(b) the number of new Telephone Exchanges likely to be set up during 1997-98;

(c) whether the target of setting up of new Telephone Exchanges have not been achieved;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA) : (a) The number of telephone exchanges set up in hilly areas are given below :

Sl. No.	Name of Distt.	No. of Exchanges Set up	
		During 1996-97	Till 31.3.97
1.	Almora	6	37
2.	Pithoragarh	2	25
3.	Dehradun	3	26
4.	Nainital	3	24
5.	U.S. Nagar	1	36
6.	Chamoli	3	39
7.	Pauri	2	32
8.	Tehri	-	33
9.	Uttarkashi	1	12
	Total	21	264

(b) 35

(c) Target fixed for setting up of new exchange have been achieved.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of (c) above.